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a communications device for connecting the customer premises equipment to a local network, the local network being connected to the data network via a network interconnection device; and

a temporary configuration server residing in the communications device, the temporary configuration server being operable to respond to configuration messages from the customer premises equipment before the network connection is capable of connecting the customer premises equipment to the data network.

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28. (New) An improved communication system comprising a customer premises equipment connected to a data network via a network connection, the customer premises equipment being operable to communicate with the data network when configured with a client network address, the customer premises equipment being operable to issue configuration messages to a configuration server connected to the data network to retrieve the client network address from the configuration server, the improvement comprising:

a communications device for connecting the customer premises equipment to a local network, the local network being connected to the data network via a network interconnection device; and

a temporary configuration server residing in the network interconnection device, the temporary configuration server being operable to respond to configuration messages from the customer premises equipment before the network connection is capable of connecting the customer premises equipment to the data network.

29. (New) An improved communication system comprising a customer premises equipment connected to a data network via a network connection, the

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customer premises equipment being operable to communicate with the data network when configured with a client network address, the customer premises equipment being operable to issue configuration messages to a configuration server connected to the data network to retrieve the client network address from the configuration server, the improvement comprising:

a communications device for connecting the customer premises equipment to a local network, the local network being connected to the data network via a network interconnection device comprising a cable modem connected to a cable network and a cable termination system connected to the data network, the local network including a network of the type selected from the group consisting of: ethernet and token ring; and

a temporary configuration server to respond to configuration messages from the customer premises equipment before the network connection is capable of connecting the customer premises equipment to the data network.

30. (New) An improved communications system as claimed in Claim 29 wherein the temporary configuration server includes a plurality of temporary network addresses with which to respond to configuration messages from a plurality of customer premises equipment.

31. (New) A method for ensuring a connection to a configuration protocol server on a data network by a customer premises equipment via a network connection, the method comprising the steps of:

issuing a request for a customer premises equipment network address from the customer premises equipment to the configuration protocol server via the the network connection;

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the network connection determining whether a connection can be made to the configuration protocol server, and if not, responding to the customer premises equipment by sending a temporary network address to the customer premises equipment;

sending a lease time for the customer premises equipment network address limiting the time of validity of the temporary network address;

issuing a request to renew the temporary network address when the lease time expires; and

the network connection determining whether a connection can be made to the configuration protocol server, and if not, responding to the customer premises equipment by sending an acknowledge message.

32. (New) A method as claimed in Claim 31 further comprising the steps of:

when the network connection determines that the connection can be made to the configuration protocol, the network connection sending a NACK message declining to acknowledge the request to renew the temporary network address;

the customer premises equipment receiving the NACK message and sending a request for the customer premises equipment network address; and

the network connection communicating the request for the customer premises equipment network address to the configuration protocol server.

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